

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WINTRY WEATHER IN JUNE

How many old people in the United States and Canada recall personal experiences of the "Big Frost" of June 5, 1859? This event is rarely mentioned nowadays, though its effects were felt over an extensive area of east-central North America. An Ohio meteorologist, Dr. S. P. Hildreth, wrote of it as follows:

"The unprecedented occurrence of a severe and destructive frost as late as the fifth of June overwhelmed the country with fear and astonishment. At a period in the growth of wheat usually considered as past all danger of this kind a sudden change in temperature in one night spread destruction and ruin to a large portion of the fields of this important cereal over all the central parts of the Ohio valley and extending from Iowa to northern New York. Indian corn shared largely in the calamity. The warmth of May had hastened the growth of this plant in many fields to the height of 12 or 18 inches. In all such cases the fields had to be replanted... The wheat being in full head and much of the grain in the milk, was entirely ruined. Potatoes were badly frosted but in a good measure regained a healthy state. Peaches and apples, which in most orchards had attained the size of almonds, were so much damaged as to fall from the trees in a few days, and only certain favored localities ripened any fruit."

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